

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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REP. SCOTT RESKE'S STATEHOUSE REPORT

INDIANAPOLIS – Lawmakers have given final approval to the first major piece of legislation to emerge from the 2005 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

I am co-author of House Enrolled Act 1003, which speeds up the implementation of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), the entity that will be charged with leading our state's efforts at job creation and retention. I am in favor of any effort to build on the benefits that we are beginning to see through the Energize Indiana program that passed in a strong bipartisan fashion in 2003. Bringing good-paying jobs to Hoosiers will always be one of my priorities.

I also am glad that we were able to change the bill substantially to ensure that members of the IEDC's board are held accountable under state ethics guidelines and the group will have to comply with the Open Door Law and the Open Records Act.

Other issues under consideration include House Bill 1002, which would create the post of inspector general, a person selected by the governor who would have the power to file and prosecute criminal charges in any county in the state. I have concerns about the inspector general having greater authority than county prosecutors, who are selected by the voters in each county. Prosecutors should stay in the judicial branch, not the executive branch.

House Bill 1137 would create a "state information technology chief" appointed by the governor to oversee a variety of telecommunications services that have been handled in the past by a coalition that includes representatives from libraries, public schools and universities. These services have included access to such things as distance learning courses for public schools and allowing specialized courses like advanced math or foreign languages to be taught at several schools by one teacher with two-way video.

In its original form, House Bill 1188 would have given the governor the power to drastically reduce citizen involvement in government by eliminating over 300 state boards and commissions that help oversee everything from education to health care to protecting children to helping older Hoosiers. The House Government and Regulatory Reform Committee has softened this proposal by ensuring there will be a legislative review before any advisory groups are eliminated.

House Bill 1719 attempts to place the state Bureau of Motor Vehicles under private control, which would allow license branches to be closed without any chance for public input. Some of you may remember that license branches were once operated under a political patronage system, with profits going to the political party of the governor. I have concerns that HB 1719 could return us to that system of 20 years ago.

House Bill 1703 would give the governor the ability to select the judges who serve in Marion County, rather than the voters. Currently, 91 counties have the right to elect judges based on their qualifications.

We are entering the final two weeks for House bills to clear committees in our chamber. In the days to come, we expect to see a proposed biennial state budget come out of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The chairman of that group, State Rep. Jeff Espich (R-Uniondale), promised this week the budget would contain

more funding for our schools. This is heartening news for those of us who have seen a number of distressing signs that schools are being forced into a financial crisis that could force teachers to be laid off, programs to be eliminated and class sizes to grow substantially.

House Democrats intend to see that Rep. Espich lives up to his promise on the budget. It will be interesting to see how he can balance those words against the governor's opposition to giving minimum guarantees in funding to schools, as well as his decision not to make up tuition support that had been promised to school corporations.

Throughout the session, I encourage you to stay in touch with me by calling me through the toll-free Statehouse telephone number of 1-800-382-9842, e-mailing me through my Internet Web site at www.IN.gov/H37 or writing to me in care of the Indiana House of Representatives, 200 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204.

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